



Roy Cooper North Carolina Attorney General

For immediate release
Date: December 15, 2008

Contact: Noelle Talley
Phone: 919/716-6413

AG Cooper reaches agreement with Mattel over tainted toys

Mattel to pay \$12 million to states, follow stricter standards for lead paint in toys

Raleigh: Mattel has agreed to follow stricter safety standards for lead paint in its toys and will pay \$12 million to North Carolina and 37 other states, Attorney General Roy Cooper announced today. The agreement comes after a massive recall of Mattel toys in 2007 which sparked the attorneys general's investigation.

"Toys should help our children have fun, not put them in danger," Cooper said. "This agreement adds extra safety measures to protect kids and give parents some peace of mind."

Under the agreement, Mattel and its subsidiary Fisher Price will follow tougher standards for accessible lead in toys. The company must also pay \$12 million to the states, including \$262,126 to North Carolina.

From August 2, 2007 through October 25, 2007, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalled approximately 2 million Mattel and Fisher-Price toys manufactured in China because of concerns that the toys contained excessive lead. At the time of the recalls, federal standards called for lead levels in accessible surface coatings not to exceed 600 parts per million. According to the attorneys general's investigation, tests of some of the recalled toys found lead levels of more than 10,000 parts per million and 50,000 parts per million.

Today's agreement requires stricter standards for toys manufactured after November 30, 2008. Since the attorneys general launched their investigation in August 2007, Congress has enacted the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act to tighten the standards for lead in surface coatings and substrates starting in February 2009. Mattel has agreed with the attorneys general to phase in the new standards before the timelines required under the federal law.

Mattel also agreed to maintain at least four years of records for subcontractors that manufacture parts for its toys, including records of lead screenings and results. Mattel will notify the attorneys general if it finds excessive lead in any of its products in violation of state or federal law or this agreement, and will work with the states to remedy such violations.

This agreement for safer toys comes in the midst of the holiday shopping season, peak time for buying toys.

"Keep toy safety in mind when you shop for holiday presents," Cooper urged parents and other shoppers. "Make sure the gifts you choose for kids are safe and age-appropriate."

Parents can check out recalls for toys, electronics and other household items by visiting www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prerel.html and can also sign up with the CPSC to get emails about future recalls. Many toys including computer and video games have age guidelines and ratings that can also be helpful. ###